Comparison of Email Service Providers: A Guide for Nonprofits

August 4, 2010

Prepared by Sam Knox

sam@groundwire.org

1402 3rd Avenue, Suite 1000

Seattle, Washington 98101

phone: 206-286-1235

fax: 206-260-2737

Important Disclaimer – The information contained in this report is as true and accurate as we could possibly make it. All information here is based on published information on each provider's website or from direct communication with sales staff. Email Service Providers are constantly changing, so bear in mind that **this report is only accurate as of July 2010**, and you should always confirm information from the vendor before making a buying decision.

Introduction

Navigating the wide array of Email Service Providers (ESPs) can be a daunting task as there are so many providers to choose from and a broad range of features and costs associated with those providers. Only some providers offer demo accounts to evaluate their service, and even then it can be difficult to uncover all of the nuances of the service until you are actively using it.

This report is intended to provide a baseline of information on 10 ESPs that we feel represent the best of breed for most nonprofit organizations from the very small to the very large. Once you carefully consider your needs around email broadcasting you should be able to use this report to decide which service provider to evaluate first.

To help you make a decision, here is a list of questions to consider. This list isn't exhaustive, but these are things you should consider when evaluating vendors:

- What is your email send volume?
- What is your email list size?
- Do you require profile management? (*a system for letting subscribers choose which lists they want to be on and update their contact info*)
- Do you need Salesforce integration?
- Do you require other integrations?
- What is your budget for email communications?
- Do you have someone (or several people) on staff who will manage your email communications effectively?
- Do you need to run a drip campaign? (*an automated series of emails you can schedule and send to subscribers*)
- Do you need autoresponders? (*a triggered email that goes out when a subscriber first joins your list, or takes some other kind of action*)

You should not base your decision to adopt a service provider without doing a thorough analysis on your own or with the help of a consultant.

Executive Summary

If you send a moderate amount of email, say 20,000 per month, **you can expect to find providers ranging in cost from $29.95 to $500 per month**. Most providers' prices go down with volume, so sending at 40,000 emails per month doesn't necessarily mean the cost will double. These prices represent a very wide range of features, integrations, and levels of service from Email Service Providers.

One of the most important factors informing a decision to adopt a particular platform is whether or not you need a database integration. Since Groundwire offers consulting primarily on the Salesforce.com

CRM, **our report highlights which providers offer a Salesforce integration** and which do not (or offer only a limited one). ExactTarget, PredictiveResponse, WhatCounts, iContact, and VerticalResponse offer strong Salesforce integrations while MailChimp, ConstantContact, and Network for Good offer very limited integrations. CampaignMonitor and Salsa offer no Salesforce integration. Integrations with other platforms (such as Drupal, Joomla, and CiviCRM) are mentioned also in this report.

Another important consideration is the ease of use of the different platforms. Some assume a certain level of technical expertise and comfort with email broadcasting, while others strive to serve non-technical users. You will want to carefully consider the technical ability of your staff and the amount of time you have allotted for email communication. **A single monthly newsletter often takes 12 staff hours or more** to produce effectively. It can take even more time if you are segmented your lists, or doing A/B testing before sending to your list.

Broadly speaking services geared toward non-technical users are: MailChimp, CampaignMonitor, iContact, ConstantContact, VerticalResponse and Network for Good. Services geared toward more technical users are: ExactTarget, PredictiveResponse, and WhatCounts.

Why No Feature Chart?

You might wonder why you won't find a chart comparing features in this report. The reason is because it's very hard to compare apples-to-apples between different providers. When we have evaluated email service providers, we've often found that there are subtle but important differences in the way a feature performs which might make it undesirable for certain use cases or skill levels. We also feel that attempts to classify a feature as "good", "bad" or "average" is a highly subjective endeavor and would only reflect our bias and opinion. For those reasons, we have declined to provide a comparison checklist of features and instead would encourage you to spend time evaluating specific features on your own. It is only through experience that you can accurately appraise whether a feature will meet your needs or not.

Price Comparison Table

One of the harder tasks to accomplish when comparing tools is doing a price comparison. Some providers base their prices on send volume; others base it on your list size and let you send as much email as you want. There are discounts for buying in bulk and discounts for nonprofits as well. While you should always do your own analysis of price, here is a hypothetical situation so that we can compare across providers.

Example: Your list size is 10,000 strong and you mail to it twice per month meaning your send volume is 20,000 emails per month. Note that some providers charge setup fees which are not included here.

Provider	**Price per month** (pay as you go)	**Price per year** (some vendors offer discounts for pre-purchase)
Network for Good (Emma)	$29.95	$360
iContact	$50	$639
ConstantContact	$75	$630
MailChimp[3]	$75	$900
VerticalResponse	$102	$765

WhatCounts[4]	$114	$1,368
iContact for Salesforce	$150	$1,800
Salsa[1, 3]	$200	$2,400
ExactTarget Core[2]	$200	$2,400
CampaignMonitor	$205	$1,880
PredictiveResponse[5]	$370	$4,440
ExactTarget Advanced[2]	$500	$6,000

1: Tier 1, Democracy in Action service
2: Annual contract only, Groundwire reseller price only
3: Unlimited send volume
4: Groundwire reseller price only ($200 regular price)
5: One-time quote, call for current price info

Email Service Providers

www.campaignmonitor.com

DESCRIPTION

The thing I like best about CampaignMonitor is the thoughtful research they do in the realm of email design and deliverability. CampaignMonitor is part of a wider initiative pushing for HTML standards in email. A lot of very useful information has come out of their effort to document exactly which email clients (Hotmail, Gmail, Outlook, etc) can interpret certain HTML or CSS elements. Clearly these guys understand the issues marketers face in terms of mass email.

The platform itself offers a wide range of features and a nicely done user interface. Everything I wanted to test or explore was easy to find and labeled intuitively. There's a nice template library available from which you can download pre-formatted source code, customize it, and upload your branded version. CampaignMonitor hits all of the essential points of a reliable email broadcasting tool and would be a great choice for a small organization sending less than 10,000 emails per month.

I refer to CampaignMonitor all the time when I need to see what the latest trends are for HTML support in email clients, sender reputation and many other topics. If you live and work in email broadcasting a lot, you'll find yourself on their website more than once. However, I found their actual platform documentation a little lacking. It's all well-written but you have to hunt around a bit to find what you're looking for. I'd really like to see these guys produce tutorial videos in the near future.

Although CampaignMonitor offers integrations with many Content Management Systems, databases, and other services, they do not currently offer a Salesforce integration.

FEATURES

In addition to the standard array of features found in most ESPs, some stand-out features from CampaignMonitor include:

- A/B split testing
- Inbox preview
- Open API
- A report that tells you which email client subscribers are using

Click here for a full list of features available on this platform.

INTEGRATIONS

CampaignMonitor offers integrations with several Content Management Systems, CRM databases, and eCommerce providers. Here's a select list of available integrations:

- WordPress
- Drupal
- Joomla
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Tactile CRM
- Shopify
- Zen Cart
- Magento

Click here for a full list of integrations available on this platform.

PRICING

For everything I love about CampaignMonitor, price is the one sore point because it gets expensive if you need to send high volumes of email. For lower volume senders, it's well priced. Here is the pricing structure:

- $5 plus 1 cent per email (up to 50,000)
- Price per email drops to $0.008 above 50,000 email credits
- Price per email drops to $0.007 above 100,000 email credits
- Price per email drops to $0.006 above 250,000 email credits
- Price per email drops to $0.005 above 500,000 email credits

The bottom line is that it's fairly inexpensive when you're doing low volume sending, but gets expensive quickly when you scale up. Let's consider a couple of scenarios here:

- Sending 500 emails a month would cost you $10
- Sending 5,000 emails a month would cost you $55
- Sending 20,000 emails a month would cost you $205
- Sending 50,000 emails a month would cost you $505

For complete pricing information on CampaignMonitor, visit their website.

Depending on your send volume this price structure may or may not be attractive. There is no monthly fee which is nice, but they also don't offer discounts to nonprofits so you're paying full price for their service.

Another thing worth mentioning is that the company is based in Australia and you might have to pay international transaction fees depending on your bank or credit card provider.

SALESFORCE INTEGRATION

No.

---

www.constantcontact.com

Description

ConstantContact has a very large client base or "market penetration" in the parlance of the business world. You've likely heard their advertisements on National Public Radio. ConstantContact is a great choice for organizations with no technical staff who need to broadcast a newsletter or announcements to their supporters quickly and easily.

One strength of this provider is the large and easily customizable template library that they offer. Most users of this platform do just fine by choosing one of the available templates and adding their own branding to it. You can do quite a bit of customizing of the templates, but there really isn't a global editing environment. For those of us who are used to using an HTML editor to edit all parts of the email at once, ConstantContact might not be the best choice.

Self-guided learning resources abound on the ConstantContact website. They offer a nice array of tutorial videos and printed "how-to" instructions. Recorded webinars can be found on many topics as well. They also offer classroom-based workshops on a regular basis. All of this adds up to a strong showing in the support department.

There's a lot to like about ConstantContact but I've always felt that you could find a better platform for the same money. Both VerticalResponse and MailChimp offer the same level of functionality and better integration options and a more powerful template editor so I wouldn't recommend it to organizations who need either of those things. Still, I know of many organizations without those needs who are happy using it.

Features

In addition to the standard array of features found in most ESPs, some stand-out features from ConstantContact include:

- Create, send and track online surveys
- Event registration, including paid events
- Partner/Affiliate program
- Open API

- Autoresponder emails

Click here for complete information on ConstantContact's features

Integrations

ConstantContact doesn't offer many pre-packaged integrations. They do have a limited Salesforce integration available, but it's not much more than an automated export from Salesforce. Data does not flow back into Salesforce to track email metrics or even unsubscribes.

That said, because ConstantContact does offer a development platform via their API others have produced integrations. Most notably, there is a Drupal module available now as well as an integration with CiviCRM.

Pricing

A big part of the success of ConstantContact can be attributed to their low prices. A big difference with other providers is that they base their pricing on list size not send volume. You can send as much email as you want, as often as you want which is a very attractive offering. Discounts are also available for nonprofits and pre-purchasing. Here are some examples of price points:

- If your list size is 2,000 contacts, a month of service costs $21
- If your list size is 4,000 contacts, a month of service costs $35
- If your list size is 8,000 contacts, a month of service costs $52.50
- If your lists size is 15,000 contacts, a month of service costs $105

Based on 12-month nonprofit pre-pay rates

Click here for complete pricing information on ConstantContact

Salesforce Integration

Yes, but very limited.

---

salsa
INGREDIENTS FOR ORGANIZING

www.salsalabs.com

Description

Salsa has been one of the mainstays in the nonprofit world for several years now. It's available either through Democracy in Action or Wired for Change (depending on your non-profit status). Salsa is much more than a mass email blasting service – they offer robust online campaign/petition features, donation

processing and tracking, event registration, custom webpages, and basic database features. Within some limits, you could probably run just about all of your business processes in Salsa. Since this report focuses on email broadcasting, let's start there and then look at the other features of this platform.

The email blasting system is serviceable. It has all the features we like, including mail merge and a nice visual HTML editor. I find the templating system confusing though. You can create your own templates automatically based on your website design (which is very nice) but you have to be careful with the settings to be able to edit the entire template via the visual HTML editor. The default behavior is that you edit a piece of content that is then slotted into your template. Basically, you don't see the final product until you've moved past editing.

For all the powerful features, the Salsa user-interface needs some help. You get lots and lots of options for everything you do, which is nice, but you have to do some learning to figure out which ones are essential and which ones aren't. You see basic functionality combined with advanced functionality and you have to figure out which is which as you go. All platforms have a learning curve, but Salsa's seems unnecessarily steep.

Without a doubt, you cannot find a better platform for the money which offers campaign tools like Salsa. If you can live with its quirks, and you don't need tight integration with Salesforce, you'll be pretty happy with the platform.

Features

As described above, Salsa is a full-featured platform offering much more than email blasting. Here are the highlights:

- Letter-to-the-editor campaigns
- Petition campaigns
- Donation processing / tracking
- Event registration
- A/B testing
- Dynamic content
- Inbox preview
- Profile management
- Autoresponse email
- Open API

Click here for more information on Salsa's features

Integrations

Salsa doesn't explicitly offer many integrations but they do offer developers a chance to build their own integrations.

Pricing

Salsa is offered to 501(c)3 organizations through Democracy in Action (c4's can use Wired for Change). There are three service tiers, each with more features than the last. Also, like ConstantContact, Salsa bases pricing on your list size, not your email send volume. Here are a couple of data points on price:

- Fewer than 3,000 contacts costs:
  - $100 /mo for Tier 1
  - $200 / mo for Tier 2
  - $300 / mo for Tier 3
- Fewer than 25,000 contacts costs:
  - $200 /mo for Tier 1
  - $300 / mo for Tier 2
  - $400 /mo for Tier 3
- There is also a one-time set up fee between $500 - $1500 depending on tier and list size

Click here for complete pricing information from Democracy in Action

Salesforce Integration

No.

Network for Good (powered by Emma)

Description

Network for Good recently scrapped their old email blasting platform and worked a deal with Emma to offer their platform at a highly reduced cost for nonprofits. So if you use the Network for Good's "EmailNow" offering, you're essentially using Emma. I've been a longtime fan of the Emma platform because of its approachability, nice graphic design, and user experience. Emma is priced fairly well for nonprofits, but within Network for Good it's actually the least expensive option on the market I've found.

Broadly speaking this platform offers much the same experience as many others described in this document. For a small-to-medium sized organization on a budget, this is a very attractive offering.

There aren't any features that are totally unique to Network for Good / Emma, although they are certainly presented very nicely. The strength of this platform rests more on the fact that they can design email templates for you (for a small cost) and the high touch and personable support staff. The pricing structure is very attractive as well.

Network for Good also offers a donation processing service called DonateNow, which includes a simple integration with EmailNow.

Features

- 39 template layouts for free
- Social sharing (track content sharing via social networks)
- Triggered emails (based on a date)
- Surveys

- Archive online version of every email

Click here for information on Network for Good's EmailNow features

Integrations

Network for Good doesn't explicitly offer many integrations but they do offer developers a chance to build their own integrations. Emma does provide a simple import from Salesforce feature, provided you perform the necessary setup.

Pricing

As stated above, the retail price of Emma is vastly reduced if you become a customer of Network for Good. Here are the pricing details:

- Send up to 20,000 emails per month for $29.95
- Over 20,000 emails per month costs $2 per thousand emails
- Example: 40,000 emails per month would cost $70
- Custom designed template for $99
- One-time account setup costs $49

Click here to view complete pricing details for Network for Good

Salesforce Integration

Yes, but very limited.

ExactTarget.

www.exacttarget.com

Description

ExactTarget is an amazing toolkit for building a very sophisticated email broadcasting program. Here at Groundwire we got really excited when we learned about this platform and its nearly seamless integration with Salesforce. Users of VerticalResponse know that it's frustrating to have user accounts where send information can't be shared and all unsubscribes are treated as global (you can't unsubscribe from just one list). With ExactTarget, both of those problems are solved.

The best fit for this platform is large volume senders (20,000 per month or more) who need Salesforce integration. ExactTarget handles email blasting expertly, but that's just where the feature set begins. You can dynamically populate sections of your template based on subscriber details, even pull content from your website directly into your email. You can set up automated "drip campaigns", triggered emails, custom landing pages, and conversion tracking. One caveat to all that is that their platform is very "modular" and you often will have to pay more money for more features.

This platform, for all its amazing prowess, does have a steeper learning curve than most Email Service Providers. It makes sense though because the power at your fingertips is proportionally larger as well.

Expect to spend a fair amount of time learning and by all means elect someone in your organization to be the resident "guru" in your organization. Also expect to pay consultants if you want to leverage the higher end features, some of which require API programming.

Despite the complexity, ExactTarget has one of the best documentation and training resources I've seen. There are scores of tutorial videos, how-to documents, a user community, and top-notch technical support.

Features

The feature set gives you a very big toolkit with which to build almost any workflow or automation you can imagine. However, with ExactTarget you usually have to spend money to get the more advanced features. Even additional user accounts cost money. All that aside, here's a list of some of the most interesting features available on this platform:

- Dynamic content
- Profile management
- Social sharing (post email content on social networking sites)
- Twitter integration
- Triggered email
- Automated interactions (drip campaigns, custom workflows, etc)
- Private sending IP address
- API access
- Reseller / Partner accounts available

Click here to explore the ExactTarget feature set and different service tiers.

Integrations

ExactTarget advertises several major integrations you can take advantage of. They are:

- Salesforce
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Google Analytics connector
- Webtrends
- Coremetrics
- Omniture

Click here to read more about the integrations offered by ExactTarget.

ExactTarget also offers Data Integration Services for helping you build a custom integration for your business processes.

Pricing

Groundwire is currently a reseller of ExactTarget so all pricing information is based solely on our "for environmental nonprofits only" pricing plan. Expect higher rates from other resellers or if you want to get an account from ExactTarget directly.

- Core account is $2,400 per year and includes 240,000 email credits
- Advanced account is $6,000 per year and includes 240,000 email credits
- Blocks of 25,000 email credits can be purchased for $150 (larger blocks can be purchased at a discount)
- Additional feeds for features such as drip campaigns, dynamic content, and user accounts

Click here to read more about Groundwire's reseller pricing and consulting services.

Salesforce Integration

Yes.

MailChimp

www.mailchimp.com

Description

MailChimp has become a very compelling email broadcasting tool over the course of the last year or so. They've put a lot of shine and polish on their user interface and offer a few features I haven't seen anywhere else. This platform is probably one of the easiest to learn and has ranked very high among our staff at Groundwire in terms of the usability. The way the have their platform priced, it seems to be the best fit for low to medium volume senders.

I also appreciate how much thought they've put into workflow. You don't have to configure notification emails or bounce around the interface and find settings to do what you're trying to do. They've done an admirable job of anticipating what configuration options you're likely to want to set for a given process, and even if you forget a step somewhere you're always returned to the exact stage in the process where you left off.

You'll find a host of resources on their website which also makes this platform attractive. Help documentation and videos are easy to find and they have an active and responsive blog to mine through. MailChimp's features and pricing are very attractive, but they don't offer much in the way of a Salesforce integration. As of this writing a new integration is in the works, but a release date hasn't been set yet.

Features

This provider has piled on a number of very useful features over the last two years. Some of the highlights are:

- RSS-to-email (automate email sends from an RSS feed)
- Dynamic Content (based on subscriber attributes)
- Autoresponders
- A/B testing

- Twitter Tracking (track tweets which refer to your campaigns)
- Profile Management
- API

Click here for a full listing of all MailChimp features

Integrations

MailChimp offers a wide range of integrations, although most of them are fairly light (i.e. web signup forms). A short list of interesting-looking integrations are:

- EventBrite
- FormSpring
- PayPal

Click here for a full listing of MailChimp integrations

Pricing

Price for the Chimp ranges from free to based on list size, to pay-as-you-go. Here's a couple of price points based on the information on their website:

- 500 subscribers, up to 3,000 sends a month is free
- 2,500 subscribers costs $30/month (unlimited sends)
- 10,000 subscribers costs $75/month (unlimited sends)
- Purchase of 75,000 email credits costs $750

Click here for a full listing of MailChimp price options

Salesforce Integration

Yes, a limited one but a new integration is currently under development.

---

iContact
Email Marketing Simplified™

www.icontact.com | www.icontactplus.com/salesforce

Description

iContact is a slick and well-presented email broadcasting tool. Their intro video is one of the best I've seen, touching on all the most salient points when first appraising a new provider. Their autoresponder feature is great to see, and not many offer this kind of functionality without additional cost.

Probably the best fit for this tool is a typical small-to-medium sized organization. It's probably one of the best entry-level offerings on the market today. You get a very intuitive interface, a great set of basic features along with a couple of more advanced ones like autoresponders, all for a very low price.

iContact's cousin iContactPlus offers a Salesforce integration, although the cost per month for using this integration is much higher than the standalone version. Plans start at $79 per month, however it does appear that if you're a very high volume sender (over 100,000 per month), iContact for Salesforce might be a better deal than similar platforms at the same volume.

Features

In addition to the basic set of features offered by all ESPs, iContact distinguishes itself by offering these exciting features:

- Surveys
- Autoresponders (automated messages sent when a new subscriber is added to your list)
- RSS (create messages from inbound RSS feed)
- Scheduled delivery
- iPhone and iPod Touch app
- Hosted newsletter archive
- Simple profile management

Click here for a full listing of iContact's features

Integrations

iContact offers a couple of integrations including:

- Salesforce
- Joomla
- Goodmail

Click here to read more about integrations available from iContact.

Pricing

The iContact website publishes a basic price list and bases cost on your list size. Here are a few price points to consider:

- If your list size is 5,000 subscribers, the cost per month is $31.96
- If your list size is 10,000 subscribers, the cost per month is $50.32
- If your list size is 25,000 subscribers, the cost per month is $101.32

These prices assume a full year of service, plus the nonprofit discount

Click here for a full list of iContact price options

Salesforce Pricing

There is a different price structure if you're going to use iContact integrated with Salesforce. It's based on send volume not list size. iContact doesn't publish their Salesforce prices on their website, but here is what they told us when we inquired in June 2010:

- Up to 10,000 messages per month for $79/mo
- Up to 25,000 messages per month for $150/mo
- Up to 50,000 messages per month for $250/mo
- Up to 100,000 messages per month for $400/mo
- Up to 250,000 messages per month for $750/mo

Salesforce Integration

Yes, via iContactPlus.

---

www.predictiveresponse.com

Description

Predictive Response is one of the newer kids on the block. According to their website, they've been around since 2006, but we just discovered them this year. PredictiveResponse has one of the best Salesforce integrations we've ever seen. In fact, it's one of the only platform specifically built to work directly with Salesforce. They made all the right decisions in terms of how data storage works and the user interface is almost entirely native Salesforce.

We also really like how PredectiveResponse thinks of email communications. Everything in their platform is *process driven* and designed to adapt to how people respond to email. For example, an email campaign isn't a single stage, but instead contains many stages such as: Sent – Not Opened, Opened – No Links Clicked, and Completed. At each stage you can choose to have a follow up email sent to the person based on which stage they are in.

Another highlight of the system is the scoring feature. A score is a number assigned to each person which is an aggregation of their total activity in your campaigns. You can assign a numerical value to an open, click, or even a conversion. These numbers are tallied up in Salesforce so that you can target your most active email subscribers. This system also keeps bulky email activity data out of Salesforce so you won't run up your data storage load nearly as fast as other integrations. If you need to know email metrics per person, the data can be accessed via the Predictive Response interface.

The two things would make this platform even more powerful are a hosted profile management system, and dynamic content. Some Salesforce integrations offer an easy way for subscribers to update their own subscription preferences and contact information. Dynamic content is content that can be automatically

merged into an email template based on specific subscriber attributes such as city, zip code, or even engagement score.

Features

In addition to the items above, PredictiveResponse offers these powerful features:

- Drip campaigns
- Automatically add people to a campaign when certain criteria is met
- Autoresponders
- Template and image storage library

Click here to read more about the features of PredictiveResponse

Pricing

Predictive Response does not publish their prices online and you'll need to talk to one of their sales reps to get a price quote. The two factors which affect price are: how much email you send each month, and how many users of the integration you'll need. Here are a couple of quotes we got from them to give you an idea of price:

- 20,000 emails per month with 6 user accounts was $370 / mo
- 70,000 emails per month with 12 user account was $600 / mo

All contracts are annual, billing is monthly. Contact PredictiveResponse for current price quote.

Salesforce Integration

Yes, it's only available to Salesforce users.

VerticalResponse

www.verticalresponse.com

Description

For the past few years VerticalResponse has been one of the most popular providers for our client base. The highlights are that VerticalResponse offers 10,000 free email credits for nonprofit or charitable organizations. For many of our clients, this means they can run their email program at no cost. The other big highlight is the Salesforce integration, which is one of the best on the market today.

Even if you don't use Salesforce, Vertical Response is a compelling offering. They've included a powerful segmentation feature to help you target your communications based on subscriber data or on interactions with previous email campaigns.

A couple of limitations of VerticalResponse are worth pointing out here. Accounts have only one user, which means you have to share logins with each other to share access to the same account. Also, all

unsubscribes are treated as global, so even if you're running multiple lists a subscriber will stop receiving all email from you if they unsubscribe. I think that true profile management is the most important new feature VerticalResponse could develop.

VerticalResponse offers an easy to learn interface, a template library, and powerful visual editor all of which make this platform a great fit for organizations with little or no technical expertise. Add to that the Salesforce integration and free email sends and you have probably the best option for nonprofits today.

Features

In addition to the standard set of email broadcasting features, VerticalResponse offers:

- Creating and sending of physical postcards to your list
- Surveys
- Share emails on Facebook and Twitter
- Extensive template library
- 25MB of image storage

Click here for a complete list of features from VerticalResponse

Integrations

- Salesforce
- Google Apps
- Google Analytics
- Intuit Workplace

Click here for more information on available integrations

Pricing

As mentioned above, nonprofit organizations are eligible for 10,000 free email sends per month. Discounts are available for nonprofits who need to purchase more. Here's the price breakdown:

- 10,000 emails per month is free
- 10,000 additional emails per month is $64
- 20,000 additional emails per month is $128

Prices assume purchase of one year's worth of email credits in advance

Click here to see complete price details, including pricing on postcards

]www.whatcounts.com

Description

Groundwire has been a reseller of WhatCounts, a Seattle based company, since about 2004 and as such we are able to offer it to our clients for a deep discount. The platform offers a host of powerful features that put it on par with other "enterprise" platforms. Profile management, dynamic content, pulling content directly from your website, suppression lists, polls, surveys, and blogging tools are all present. However, putting those features to use isn't for the light-hearted. You need to invest time to learn how to use many of the features, and some basic operations are unusually difficult such as inserting images. Their 150 page user manual describes all the features in detail, and I recommend keeping it close at hand as you learn the platform.

This year WhatCounts released version 7.3 of their platform which brings an expanded set of features to users of the platform. Highlights are inbox preview, video media hosting, social media integrations and mobile device support. Also, WhatCounts now offers a Salesforce integration but we weren't able to demo it before writing this report. From all appearances it should be a pretty tight integration

WhatCounts also offers a "broadcaster" service which essentially means that you can purchase a mail server. This kind of service is perfect for high-volume senders who need to guarantee mail delivery at very specific times of day, such as online magazines or other news service style organizations.

Features

WhatCounts offers a ton of features beyond the basics of email composition and list management. Highlights are:

- Robust profile management
- Dynamic content
- "Smart Get" (pulls content from your website and merges it into your email template)
- Video hosting
- Social media integrations
- Inbox preview
- Surveys, Polls, Blog
- API

Click here for more information on WhatCounts' features

Integrations

Other than their newly released Salesforce integrations, WhatCounts doesn't explicitly offer any others. They do offer developers a chance to build their own integrations through their API.

Pricing

Groundwire has a reseller agreement with WhatCounts, so these prices are only available for our clients. Regular retail price is slightly less than double what you see here:

- 5,000 email sends is $30/mo
- 10,000 email sends is $60/mo
- 20,000 email sends is $114/mo
- 50,000 email sends is $270/mo

Salesforce Integration

Yes.

Salesforce Mass Email

If you're a regular Salesforce user, you probably know that Salesforce itself can send mass email without having to use a third-party integration. While this is true, there are some significant limitations to this feature.

- Can only send up to 1,000 emails per day
- If you reach this limit, any automated email messages that are initiated by triggers or workflow will fail
- Information on email results is limited

Our recommendation is not to use Salesforce Mass Email for regular broadcast email lists like a newsletter list or action alert list. You can use it for "transactional" style emails such as donor recognition, membership renewal notice, or other business related communications.

Other Providers

This report is by no means exhaustive of all the ESPs on the market. There are dozens more providers similar to all of the above and several others that are multi-service platforms.

Convio for example can be your website, database, and email program all wrapped into one. eTapstry and Donor Perfect offer donor management as the focus of their offering, in addition to email blasting.

If you want to look beyond the providers covered in this report, here is a short list of ESPs to consider:

- Convio
- Eloqua
- Blackbaud Sphere
- eTapestry
- Donor Perfect
- eROI

- JangoMail

About the Author

Sam began his career at Groundwire as a volunteer in December 2005, then became a work-study student and finally a regular staff member in 2008. He has extensively documented many of the online tools used by Groundwire and our clients including the Plone Content Management System and Salesforce. He is now focused on delivering the Email Broadcasting consulting program for Groundwire in addition to training, web analytics consulting, content strategy and related projects.

Sam holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington's Program on the Environment, now known simply as the College of the Environment. He also holds a Certificate in Restoration Ecology, which makes him a certified plant nerd (in addition to being a technology nerd).

About Groundwire

Groundwire delivers technology to engage people, organizations and communities in building a sustainable society.

We know the groups we work with have their hands full saving the world. That's why at Groundwire, we're inspired every day to put our skills to work. We offer cutting-edge online tools and strategies to **environmental organizations** dedicated to real change. And, we are able to offer our services at a deep discount thanks to the generous support of foundations and individuals who believe in the impact we make.

1402 Third Ave, Suite 1000, Seattle, WA 98101

p 206.286.1235 info@groundwire.org